



THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS OF THE 21ST CENTURY: CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF VITTORIO HÖSLE

A CRISE ECOLÓGICA DO SÉCULO XXI: CONSIDERAÇÕES A PARTIR DA FILOSOFIA DE VITTORIO HÖSLE

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Camila Giovanna Xavier de Oliveira Frazão¹

Deilton Ribeiro Brasil²

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to investigate the four pillars of the ecological crisis experienced on the planet throughout the 21st century, baring its consequences for vulnerability *status* groups, seeking to offer necessary answers to overcome current global environmental problems. The work uses the descriptive-analytical method, through bibliographic research, using the reading of articles and books, with the purpose of demonstrating that the democratic system has been used as a maneuver mass to feedback power structures, keeping the *status quo* in the hands of groups that have profited from the violation of the environment for decades.

¹ Mestranda do PPGDir da Universidade de Itaúna (UIT). Especialista em Direito Material e Processual do Trabalho pela Faculdade Pitágoras. Professora do Curso de Direito da Faculdade UNA de Bom Despacho-MG. Advogada. Email: camilax.adv@gmail.com

² Pós-doutor em Direito pela Università degli Studi di Messina, Itália. Doutor em Direito pela UGF/RJ. Professor do PPGDir da Universidade de Itaúna (UIT), Faculdades Santo Agostinho (FASASETE-AFYA), Faculdade de Direito de Conselheiro Lafaiete (FDCL). Professor visitante do PPGDir da Universidade de Caxias do Sul (UCS). Email: deilton.ribeiro@terra.com.br



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RESUMO

O presente artigo busca investigar os quatro pilares da crise ecológica vivida no planeta ao longo do século XXI, desnudando suas consequências para os grupos de condição de vulnerabilidade, buscando oferecer respostas necessárias à superação dos atuais problemas ecológicos globais. O trabalho utiliza-se do método descritivo-analítico, por meio de pesquisas bibliográfica, valendo-se da leitura de artigos e livros, com o propósito de demonstrar que o sistema democrático tem sido utilizado como massa de manobra para retroalimentar estruturas de poder, mantendo o *statu quo* nas mãos dos grupos que há décadas lucram com a violação do meio ambiente.

Palavras-chave: Crise ecológica; Direitos fundamentais; Vittorio Höfle.

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to investigate the issues that give rise to the current ecological crisis that the planet has been witnessing over the last few decades, and which is intensifying to dangerous proportions. The idea is to understand the philosophical and sociological contours that brought humanity to the current level, in the social, political and economic spheres, which completely fall out in the socio-environmental aspects.

There is currently a consensus that the ecological crisis is supported by four pillars, namely: population increase, gas emissions, pollution and automation. The sum of these four factors has a preponderant role in the instabilities that affect the modern world, putting in check the democratic system and the political resilience of countries, especially economically underdeveloped ones.



Hence, the need to standardize the political debate into two strands, that is, initially at the domestic level and, later, at the international level, in order to seek joint actions. At the domestic level, the concern must be to ensure a balance between the richest and poorest layers of society. At the international level, in turn, a cooperative dialogue involving countries at all levels of socioeconomic development must be sought.

Bringing social, political and economic balance to the Earth is one of the major challenges the world has been experiencing, and it is one of the fastest ways to achieve social justice. The current global scenario demands that actions be taken together, to ensure the achievement of the goals necessary to reach collective thinking at a global level, in the long term, as one of the only ways to reverse the collapse that is rapidly approaching of the planet.

Given this initial construction, the first part of the work aims to disentangle the pillars of the ecological crisis, demonstrating how they are umbilically interconnected and affect the planet's environmental balance in various ways, promoting inequalities that directly affect social justice. The issues arising from these processes permeate the field of environmental law, entering the sphere of fundamental rights head on and calling for mechanisms capable of guaranteeing the ruptures that come to balance the current balance that opposes access to rights and the distribution of risks.

The second part of the article, in turn, aims to propose skillful solutions to overcome current global problems, as a way to guarantee an ecologically balanced environment, the strengthening of the democratic system and the internalization of long-term thinking. The paradigm shift is essential to protect the human species that has been taking large steps towards extinction.

The method used in this article is descriptive-analytical, through the demonstration of the current ecological crisis, its mode of operation and the extent to which it affects groups in conditions of vulnerability. The proposal is to list the facts that need to undergo urgent changes, in order, later, to offer solutions suitable for overcoming them.



The methodology is based on theoretical-bibliographic research, making use of the reading of books and articles, by national and foreign authors, which touch the theme, aiming to propose approaches that address the real problems that affect global society, in the search for an ecologically balanced environment.

2 PILLARS OF THE CURRENT GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

The globalized world not only reduces geographic distances, but also standardizes the problems that affect society as a whole. The Earth, currently, has contours that approximate, and a lot, practically all countries. With each passing year, the debate that encompasses local problems becomes more intertwined, causing a large number of countries to face the same problems.

The current crisis in global political systems is anchored in four central pillars, which are the unrestrained population increase, pollution, the emission of greenhouse gases and automation processes. The solution to these challenges is the fine line that separates success and failure in achieving goals relating to an ecologically balanced environment and fundamental rights for all (MÜLLER, 1996).

The problem is not simple, nor is it capable of finding adept answers to solve it in the short term. Furthermore, he has an enemy capable of taking him to an even greater degree, which is ultranationalism (HARARI, 2018). The rise of the far right in recent decades sets the tone for the dangers isolationism poses to society.

The pillars of the crisis are not dissociated factors. They have a wide connection with each other. Population increase, for example, is directly related to pollution (MÜLLER, 1996). It is important to bear in mind that pollution, in this context, concerns not only the contamination of water by domestic sewage, but also the contagion of rivers by chemical



products, which are used in mining and agricultural processes, among hundreds of other possible ways. Pollution, in turn, also has the emission of gases as one of its biggest villains.

The emission of greenhouse gases is currently a global problem of the first magnitude and of great complexity. This is an aspect that is highly associated with globalization and involves developed and underdeveloped countries, throwing light directly on factors relating to capitalism and socio-environmental justice (GIDDENS, 2010).

There is a consensus that the production of greenhouse gases is predominantly the responsibility of developed countries, however, currently, the problem has gained even greater proportions due to globalization. The data indicate that the emission of gases is the main responsible for global warming (GIDDENS, 2010).

Forecasts for the future regarding the increase in the Earth's temperature are increasingly worrying. It is concluded that as the planet increases its average temperature the most, the glaciers will melt and cause changes in the sea level. The sum of these factors causes changes to occur in the planet's water cycle, and an increase in social inequalities (GIDDENS, 2010).

The recurrent ecological crisis makes the debate about the future of the climate increasingly urgent. Issues directly involving social justice cannot be detailed. The risk of an environmental collapse is increasingly imminent. Forecasts for the future indicate a worsening of the problems in regions that are already suffering from environmental degradation.

In other words, areas that are currently dry could become completely arid, while regions suffering from flooding could become submerged, due to rampant climate change and rising sea levels (GIDDENS, 2010).

The root of most of these problems is the emission of gases, which currently has even shed light on ethical and moral issues, creating a conflict between social classes and countries with different degrees of economic development. The truth of the matter is that globalization



has raised the reality in which rich countries manage to invest in unhealthy enterprises located in territories of underdeveloped states to another level (BECK, 2019).

The current model of the capitalist market makes rich countries use the stock exchange to invest in projects that degrade the environment in developed countries, in such a way that the northern hemisphere states are able to promote the destruction of natural resources in the countries of the region south of the planet. Environmental degradation, however, is not accompanied by a profit for those who suffer from its effects. In other words, poor countries do not benefit from the damage caused on their territory (GALEANO, 2012).

Unhealthy jobs require labor, which is most often performed by people with low education, who receive negligible amounts to perform that function. The process entails an increase in environmental degradation in that region, with the consequent increase in water and air pollution rates, depending on the type of unhealthy enterprise that has been installed there.

The situation directly affects the right to survival of vulnerable groups, since unhealthy work is, as a rule, performed by poor people, who are forced to perform this type of work as a means of survival. The paradox in which health is delivered as a means of guaranteeing survival is created.

In this sense, Ulrich Beck teaches that:

In the competition between death by hunger, visibly imminent, with death by intoxication, imminent but invisible, the urgency of combating material misery is imposed. Without the large-scale use of chemical substances, the productivity of crops would fall and insects and fungi would devour their share. With the chemical industry, poor countries on the periphery can fill their own food stocks, achieving a



certain independence from the power of the metropolises of the industrial world (BECK, 2019, p. 50).

The discussion broadens the debate placed on different positions by companies, workers, local society and environmental advocates. The current level of information dissemination makes companies concerned about their image in society, which requires taking appropriate measures to reduce the negative marketing that is done against them.

Thus, to contain popular pressure, escape protests and animosities, companies that pollute the environment create infrastructure works in the regions where they operate. In other words, day care centers and soccer fields are built for needy children. The incentive to social projects is also another mechanism used to buy popular support, through the donation of basic food baskets and other inputs. It is as if the polluters buy the leniency of the community (ASCELRAD; MELLO; BEZERRA, 2009).

Capitalism, in this way, uses poverty as a way of consolidating itself. In the case of underdeveloped states, such as Brazil, this becomes even easier, as the system occupies a vacuum left by the absence of public authorities. The issue of unhealthy employment is not a separate factor it is just one of several problems that affect the weakness of poor states in protecting fundamental rights (ASCELRAD; MELLO; BEZERRA, 2009).

The state's poverty directly affects the lives of economically disadvantaged citizens, leaving them hostage to public policies capable of helping them to break down structural barriers, which impede social mobility and create a socioeconomic gap between the extremes of the population. Enrique Leff (2015, p. 58) teaches, "the number of poor is greater than ever before in human history, and extreme poverty affects more than a billion people on the planet."

The issue of poverty becomes even more complex when analyzed in more depth. When socioeconomic development, environmental degradation and poverty are put into the



equation, the current dominant political-economic-social system that dictates the rules in the world is exposed (LEFF, 2015, p. 58-59).

The factors responsible for sedimenting the recurring ecological crisis are not dissociated from the exclusionary policy, which takes away from political minorities and vulnerable groups the right to actively participate in the debate that involves the future of the planet. In fact, what is perceived is a deliberate segregation, which comes with the purpose of maintaining the *status quo* (MBEMBE, 2018, p. 42-43).

To this end, people in vulnerable conditions are removed from the right to access information, health and other rights that make up the so-called existential minimum. The socioeconomic gap produces a kind of separation between groups, in such a way that they start to have their own characteristics. Poverty, for example, receives a legacy of the increase in population and unemployment.

Population increase brings problems in several aspects of society, primarily because it is directly related to poverty. Data have shown that population density has increased in frightening proportions in the poorest regions of the planet and especially among underdeveloped countries. This creates the challenge of feeding more people and generating more jobs, in order to guarantee an economically sustainable country (FREITAS, 2016, p. 145-146).

Economic sustainability, in turn, tends to be the enemy of ecological one. Thus, to feed thousands of people, pesticides are used as a way to optimize production. The problem is that this type of product is highly toxic and leads to contamination of those who use it and of rivers and lakes, not to mention the food itself, which is harmful to the health of those who eat it.

The situation brings more contours, from the moment when people, who work directly with pesticides, as a rule, because they do not have adequate instruction and apparatus to handle them, end up intoxicating themselves. Moreover, as they do not have the



financial conditions to afford medical treatment, they live at the mercy of a public health system, which, at times, is incapable of providing the individual with adequate treatment.

The current reality experienced in economically underdeveloped countries brings even more difficulties to the debate, as it directly involves social justice and access to basic supplies by individuals in a vulnerable condition. In this context, current unemployment rates are indicative of the current economic crisis that affects developing States across the planet.

Unemployment, in turn, is the materialization of the problems of contemporary society. It points directly to issues involving social justice and calls into question the capacity of underdeveloped countries to promote social mobility. Achieving a well of work that is not unhealthy and provides a salary compatible with higher education has become increasingly a rarity (BECK, 2019).

The work wells are decreasing more and more due to automation processes. Men replace machines, which contributes to the dizzying rise in unemployment. The path found by society to avoid the risk of being without a formal job is in higher education, which also faces a great challenge (HARARI, 2018).

The education system has been highly transformed by capitalism, through the monetization of higher education courses. The filter mechanisms are increasingly reduced, enabling more people to enter college. The result is low quality education, which train professionals who are incapable of performing their functions, feeding back into a vicious circle of jobless diplomas (BECK, 2019).

In this sense, Ulrich Beck teaches that:

Most young people threatened by unemployment after completing their studies are finally willing to accept 'temporarily' (as they hope) any job, in order, at least initially, to be integrated into the employment



system. However, they see the danger that, by accepting unskilled jobs or as apprentices, they will be permanently banished to the field of low-skilled activities (BECK, 2019, p. 222-223).

The unemployment problem is a magic wand for the government, which is forced to act to contain social pressures. The result of the process is the flexibilization of labor norms, under the premise that it is necessary to withdraw rights to guarantee jobs (BECK, 2019, p. 212).

The current scenario of the global ecological crisis has shown that environmental problems, for decades, have ceased to be environmental problems, and have become part of the political panorama practically in every corner of the planet. The agenda of the states' socioeconomic and political states can no longer be carried out without a critical eye aimed at ensuring mechanisms capable of overcoming the events that jeopardize the political participation and survival of groups in a condition of vulnerability.

3 NECESSARY CHANGES TO OVERCOME THE CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

As a rule, crises have as one of the main consequences the questioning of the status quo by the individuals involved in them. When the problem is shown to be related to the political system, it is also called into question. The 21st century, in turn, has seen the democratic system put in the eye of the hurricane (SANTOS, 2007, p. 71-94).

Looking superficially, talking about instability in the democratic system seems to be something extremely curious. The idea of a political regime in which the people choose their rulers, actively participate in decision-making processes, and can go to court to plead



violations of rights seems to be the most perfect of all worlds. However, reality has proved to be quite different from theory (SANTOS, 2007, p. 71-94).

The democratic system is one of humanity's greatest achievements throughout the contemporary era. The political regime that was consolidated in the world throughout the 20th century, and had its boom in the first years after World War II, can be considered as one of the main bridges to reach social balance. Notwithstanding its avant-garde character and its potential to bring about improvements in collective life, it also needs a check, to ensure that it is not used as a means of establishing a majority dictatorship (MOUNK, 2019).

Democracy helped to consolidate the so-called Democratic Rule of Law. This state paradigm can be seen as the materialization of a system anchored on three pillars, that is, freedom, equality and fraternity. For their functioning, they must be harmonized, so that the guarantee of freedom must be made without forgetting the social aspect, which is represented by equality (SARLET, 2015).

The ideals of fraternity, in turn, come with the purpose of taking into account collective and diffuse rights in decision-making processes. This is perhaps the great difference between the democratic paradigms of law in relation to the others, as it puts the thought of the collectivity in evidence, to the detriment of individualism, which, until then, had a preponderant role in other realities (SARLET, 2015).

However, homogenizing this debate is not a simple task, especially when dealing with countries as unequal as those located in the southern hemisphere of the planet. The democratic system currently has, as one of its greatest difficulties, achieving a balance between positions of power, that is, electing councilors, deputies and senators, from all social classes and ideological banners (MÜLLER, 1996).

The sociological reality of the globe, however, has exposed the crisis of the democratic system, as follows:



The quality of a democracy is governed by its ability to solve the objective problems of society, and this ability is very likely to be diminished or entirely hampered if leaders and their political and social elites spend most of their energy in concentrating the your power and abide in it (MÜLLER, 1996, p. 59).

In this sense, the democratic crisis is inextricably linked to the capitalist system. From the moment that those in positions of power adopt behaviors that move towards feedback from the roots of domination, a barrier is built that prevents the mobility of groups that do not belong to privileged positions.

The current forms of capitalism act directly as an impediment to this reach, which is currently gaining more and more strength, through the myth that the minimal State is the salvation of all problems. History has shown that the less the State intervenes, the more strength the groups in power gain, making it even more difficult to achieve social equality.

The neoliberal capitalist democratic system ends up acting as a kind of impediment to achieving balance in elective positions, since the economic elites manage to use gaps within the system itself to strengthen themselves. The logic is as follows, candidates with greater purchasing power are able to finance their campaigns and, consequently, gain more evidence, in such a way that they come out ahead in winning the sympathy of the electorate (MOUNK, 2019).

The globalized world creates new conflicts that shed light directly on discussions involving the democratic system. The ecological crisis, in this context, has served to expose discriminations that have existed for years, but which started to receive the proper treatment only in recent months, which is aporophobia.



The neologism, coined by Adela Cortina, is intended to address the existing prejudice against poor people, that is, it is a process that places poor people on the margins of political-social participation. This “phenomenon of an asymmetrical globalization” largely harms individuals who are in search of social mobility through work and study (CORTINA, 2020, p. 165).

The consequence of aporophobic policy is the spread of unhealthy work among poor people, as discussed above. In this context, there is the so-called feedback from positions of power. As Adela Cortina teaches, “if inequality increases, wealth escapes the poor and high inequality makes it difficult even to achieve growth” (CORTINA, 2020, p. 167).

The problem is that the States have only come to realize that overcoming poverty and improving reality depends directly on treating under-sufficient people. It is not possible to improve development indices by increasing inequality. If the rich become billionaires, but the poor remain in misery, the *status quo* is held (CORTINA, 2020).

The height of the crisis of global democracy, which has been magnified by the coronavirus pandemic, shows just the real extent of the damage done to democratic systems around the world. The issue rekindles discussions that go beyond the borders of countries, and calls into question the way in which the ecological crisis affects the present and can affect the future (GOES; RAMOS; FERREIRA, 2020).

The vaccination situation against covid-19 is one of the demonstrations of how inequality in access to immunization agents also harms those who have completed the complete vaccination course. States that failed to prove immunizations for their populations can negatively influence the post-pandemic resumption. There is a consensus that in a country where a large part of the population could not be vaccinated, it is more prone to the emergence of new variants (GOES; RAMOS; FERREIRA, 2020).

As soon as a new variant is discovered, the warning light is turned on. Thus, more measures of social distancing and containment of the spread of the virus are adopted.



Because of this process, the pace of economic recovery slows down, which may lead to higher levels of unemployment and poverty (GOES; RAMOS; FERREIRA, 2020).

This entire process creates a relationship of cause and effect, which affects the core of the social, political and economic system of the States. No wonder that the sum of poverty and unemployment attracts informality as a way of survival. It is not by chance that the uberization process has been the path that marginalized people have found as a means of subsistence (BECK, 2019).

However, in addition to the issue of the pandemic, the fuel crisis, which has been bringing an increase in the price of this input, also directly affecting those who already work informally. In other words, the system that is already weakened by its very nature becomes even more vulnerable. Informal workers, who no longer have social security rights, have been put back on a collision course with hunger. The increase in fuel prices is one of the biggest factors responsible for this phenomenon, which adds to inflation and other situations that make life difficult for those who are already at the mercy of the lack of effective public policies (PAIVA, 2021).

Apophobic politics feeds on inequality, poverty, and the ills of States, which are incapable of guaranteeing fundamental rights for the socioeconomically less favored classes. In this way, the absence of fundamental rights leaves the rich increasingly rich, and the low-sufficient increasingly vulnerable, crystallizing inequality (ADELA, 2020).

The conservation of groups with more socioeconomic power in positions of power fosters a process called the Law of the Strongest. As Luigi Ferrajoli (2011) teaches, confronting this system of domination is only possible through the realization of fundamental rights.

Based on Luigi Ferrajoli's explanation:



All fundamental rights are (and are justified as) the laws of the weaker as an alternative to the laws of the stronger that would apply in their absence: firstly, the right to life, against the law of whoever is physically stronger; secondly, the rights of immunity and freedom, against the law of whoever is politically stronger; thirdly, social rights, which are the rights to survival, against the law of those who are socially and economically stronger (FERRAJOLI, 2011, p. 106).

The absence of protection for fundamental rights creates, fosters and crystallizes inequalities, which results in segregation (SARLET, 2019). As an attempt has been made to demonstrate issues involving population growth, gas emissions, and pollution, they also act directly in promoting this distance, also bringing light to the housing issue, which is a very serious problem.

Environmental vulnerability is directly influenced by the issue of poverty. It is not by chance that favelas are places with a high risk of collapse, and riverside regions are at a very high risk of flooding. The discussion surrounding this reality is directly related to necropolitics, that is, the politics of death, sponsored by the State (MBEMBE, 2018, p. 16-17).

In the words of Achille Mbembe (2018, p. 16-17), necropolitics can be understood as the power that the State has to develop the policy of death, through a biopower. It is as if the state force had the autonomy to choose who should or should not die. In addition, this process takes place outside the fundamental rights to life and equality.

The realization of fundamental rights, as a way of overcoming the current ecological crisis, is extremely urgent, especially with regard to the validation of some principles dear to environmental protection, such as intergenerational equity and the establishment of a State environmental democracy (CARVALHO, 2013).



Intergenerational equity is a principle that has as its scope the dialogue between generations, that is, it requires that present generations have the obligation to deliver to future ones an environment with the same level of conservation as they received. The purpose of the principle is to ensure a gradual improvement in environmental quality, in order to enable an evolution in the quality of life of all individuals (CARVALHO, 2013). In summary, it is as if every individual on Earth has a moral obligation to return the planet to a level of degradation equal to or less than how it was when it was born.

The establishment of intergenerational equity goes hand in hand with the strengthening of what is understood as an environmental democratic State. Délton Winter de Carvalho (2013) teaches that, to achieve ecological balance, countries must behave like Environmental Democratic States, that is, countries that use environmental protection as a criterion for decision-making. This situation helps to shorten the path to achieving sustainable democracy, which is the one that places the environment in a privileged position in the decision-making process.

To do so, it is necessary to give citizens the opportunity to claim their rights and seek environmental protection. The exercise of this right goes far beyond the creation of norms suitable for protecting the environment, it is also necessary to put in place mechanisms capable of exercising these rights.

Hence the need to bring those who are directly affected by environmental damage into the debate. A sustained democracy cannot be built apart from popular participation. Vulnerable groups must have a preponderant role in the defense of diffuse and collective interests, especially those that touch on the direct interests of the class.

In this sense, one of the greatest concerns of the community must be with large companies, especially multinationals, which use a wide range of technology, since they are the main responsible for the emission of gases. Given this scenario, automation processes, in turn, are also at the top of current global problems, for two main reasons.



The first is that modernization has brought massive unemployment, since human labor is replaced by machines, so that productivity is increased and problems such as labor claims, compensation for accidents, among other problems are reduced. The second reality of this process is the obsolescence of products, which suddenly become archaic and, very often, end up being improperly discarded (BECK, 2019).

This phenomenon can be explained as follows:

In practical terms, planned obsolescence is part of a market strategy that aims to ensure constant consumption through dissatisfaction. Products that satisfy the needs of those who buy them become obsolete or present insurmountable defects in a short period of time, having to be necessarily replaced by more modern ones (BRASIL; BORTONCELLO, 2020, p. 265).

Obsolescence is one of the saddest nuances of a liquid modernity, which sacrifices the planet, showing a society that consumes and discards products, in a predatory way, without thinking about the direct and indirect consequences for collective life (BAUMAN, 2001). In practice, automation processes end up laying bare much of what is at the root of the current global ecological crisis, which affects not only capitalism, but also the rule of law system as a whole.

Understanding the current scenario and promoting changes actively depends on the sensitivity of government officials, and on a proactive behavior that is capable of guaranteeing essential changes, aimed at strengthening the rule of law system, without neglecting sustainable development (LEFF, 2015).

It is important to keep in mind that democracy does not just happen every two years when voters go to the polls. The rule of law system is an everyday process, which lacks the



active and proactive participation of those involved, as one of the only ways capable of broadening the debate and preventing the system from turning into a tyranny of the majority (MOUNK, 2019).

In this sense, Vittorio Hösle points out that:

Our consumer epoch has poisoned all ascetic traditions with the known consequences for the environment, for relations between developed and developing countries, etc., in such a way that it is not difficult to see that, without a rebirth of ascetic values, the aforementioned problems will not will be resolved (HÖSLE, 1997, p. 328-329).

When studying the philosophy of the ecological crisis, it becomes easily noticeable that it already permeates the environmental field, entering the fundamental rights and the lives of individuals (GIDDENS, 2010).

Protecting the environment, in a globalized world that is highly unequal to that of the 21st century, has proven to be one of the most effective ways to ensure social justice, as environmental degradation has the clear purpose of benefiting some groups at the expense of others. And history has shown that those who pay the price for violations of the environment are, as a rule, those who least contributed to the catastrophic scenario that took place decades ago.

FINAL REMARKS

The current global reality is highly delicate, and forecasts for the future show that the situation tends to deteriorate exponentially. Humanity is racing against time to reverse the



situation, which is dramatic in virtually every corner of the planet. It's as if every part of the globe had highly complex social and environmental issues to call their own.

Thus, the current ecological crisis points directly to four pillars listed in the text, so that each one of them has its large share of contribution to environmental degradation and the increase in socioeconomic inequalities, which the planet continues to witness. Changing this picture, although necessary, will not be simple, nor easy.

It is highly delicate to approach the problems that affect the world of the 21st century, because they glean with great intensity in the field of ethics and capitalism. Issues such as birth control, pesticide policy in food production and gas emissions have major barriers, bumping up against, for example, the lobby of large economic conglomerates.

Nevertheless, achieving a paradigm shift in the short, medium and long term requires the strengthening of the substantial rule of law process, through the empowerment of vulnerable groups, and enabling them to have congruent mechanisms for active participation in decision-making processes. . To this end, it is essential to guarantee access to justice and increase government transparency.

The modification of widely crystallized scenarios requires revisiting pre-established structures, offering mechanisms suitable for the exercise of rights by those in conditions of vulnerability. The change, to be legitimate, must be made within the legality, taking advantage of the prerogatives of the rule of law system, and all the legal aspects related to it.

The empowerment of vulnerable groups that are, as a rule, the most affected by the ecological crisis, is directly linked to direct democracy. In other words, through the ballot boxes, it is necessary for the population to vote for candidates who represent their factual reality, in order to prevent the emptying of anti-democratic agendas and dissonant environmental protection. In this sense, the City Councils, Legislative Assemblies, Congress and the National Senate must be trustworthy reflections of society, in aspects that encompass



gender, race, class, education and disability. If society is plural, the spaces of power must also be plurally occupied.

It is indisputable that democracy is one of the greatest achievements of contemporary society. However, it cannot be seen as something finished, which does not need improvement. When analyzing the rule of law system, without actively criticizing the current form of income distribution, access to justice and information, there is a risk of transforming the system into the dictatorship of the majority in power, which, as demonstrated, does not reflect plurality present in society.

For this reason, fundamental rights aimed at protecting minorities must act as a real springboard, capable of balancing the scales and preventing the groups that occupy the top of the planet's socioeconomic pyramid from being able to dictate the rules. The real inclusion of all social groups in the political decision-making process is the fastest way to overcome the current ecological crisis, which, as demonstrated, has been present in the environmental sphere for decades.

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